

The Historacle

October, 2004

The Official newsletter of the Talent Historical Society

206 East Main Street • P.O. Box 582 • Talent, OR 97540 • 541-512-8838

Membership Drive

There is no better way to show your support for Talent history than by purchasing an membership to Talent Historical Society. Memberships are due this time of the year. In the past few years our membership levels have hovered around 100. That's a nice number, but we can do better. Currently, our historical society is dependent on funds from Jackson County. But by the year 2007 those funds will likely be drying up entirely. Our long range plans include moving into the library building when the new Talent library is finished which will mean we will have to begin paying a monthly utility fee and maintaining our own society without the help of county funds. We can do it, but will need on-going support from our members and the general public. You can help by going to the next level of membership, soliciting new members, volunteering or serving on the board and talking with others about the importance of preserving our town's history. This is not something somebody else can do, we are small and need each interested person to contribute what they can. We would like to continue to do oral histories, to collect artifacts for our future museum, and archivally conserve the things we already have. Each challenge we have can be faced if we work together and show the rest of the valley how much Talent values history.

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For your convenience, a membership application is included on page 6. Use it to renew your membership or pass it on to a friend and encourage them to join.

Have you noticed?

Talent is noisy these days along "I" Street. There are two constructions projects going on with hammering and excavating making a lot of racket. I can't tell you what will be in store for the house, but I can tell you a little about the history of the house at 104 "I" Street. That house was owned first by Lorenzo and Jennie Sleppy and cost a whopping \$400. to build in 1912. Housing was so scarce in Talent at the time that 13 applicants wanted to rent the house as soon as construction began! In the 1920s the house was sold to the Withrow family who retained ownership until the 1980s. Thus, the historic name of the house is Sleppy-Withrow.



Sleppy-Withrow house in Talent OR - photo from THS collection



Harvest Festival in Talent

A big thank you goes to everyone who stopped by our booth at the Talent Harvest Festival this year. Our little blue tent welcomed people to come and get a Talent T-shirt and to come to look at the new Talent Album with photos, captions and short history vignettes. If you missed seeing the album it is now in the Talent Public Library. Ralph Hunkins, Alice Burnette, and John Morrison from the board of directors each took turns at the booth to help out. We missed the Gleims, Lianis Reichstein, and Lynn Newbry and hope they will be ready to go next year.

The *Historacle* is published quarterly by the
Talent Historical Society
P O Box 582/ 206 E. Main St.
Talent, OR 97540

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Comments & letters may be sent to the Editor, The *Historacle*, by mail or by email to casebeer@jeffnet.org. Members of the Society receive the *Historacle* free with membership.



One of the John Moulton paintings on loan from Susan Moulder

WANTED: Old Paintings

Have you heard of **John Moulton**? A collection of his paintings will be on display at the annual meeting in November. If you have a painting by him or **any other** local artist of the past, please consider loaning it to THS for exhibit at our annual meeting. We are also seeking information on the artists, **William Oatman and Lydia Powers**. Our collection includes one nice painting by William Oatman and a Rogue Valley resident has a few of Lydia Powers she is willing to loan us. If you have information or examples of their work please contact me (Jan) at 512-8838 by October 25th.

OREGON INDEPENDENT SPIRIT HONORABLY ACQUIRED EARLY ON

Sixteen years before Oregon became one of the American states, and six years before it became a U. S. Territory, Oregonians created their own government—the year 1843. Oregon at that time had no governmental structure and no laws, and no legal land titles (perhaps a more important consideration than all the others noted).

Great Britain and the United States had negotiated a joint occupancy treaty in an effort to ward off Spanish claims to Oregon, Washington and present British Columbia, as well as Russian claims to the West Coast of North America. The Russians owned Alaska,

and they had planted settlements along the California coast as far south as San Francisco Bay (hence the Russian River in present Marin and Sonoma counties, a river that flows into San Francisco Bay). The Russians hunted sea otter even as far south as the islands off Santa Barbara.

Oregon was home to a few Americans (in 1837, for example, only 37 white male Americans were in the present states of Oregon, Washington and Idaho—and that included the famous missionary groups led by Jason Lee near Salem and Whitman near present Walla Walla). Even fewer British citizens were

here, although Hudson Bay employed French Canadians, Hawaiians, both of which often had Indian wives and children.

The largest population members in Oregon were those of the Native Americans who spoke 26 Indian languages, even though all residents

could converse in the Chinook trade jargon—a new creole language based on English, French, Spanish and Chinook. Many older Oregonians still could converse in the jargon in the 1930s. At any rate, 52 men voted at Champoege (now in Yamhill county) on the banks of the Willamette

*“Oregon ...had
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River halfway between Oregon City and Salem to form a government. Interestingly enough, a number of French Canadians who had retired from service with the Hudson Bay Company voted affirmatively for a provisional government. Two months later, settlers returned to Champoege to enact a constitution for the “provisional” government. Today a 615 acre park commemorates the place where Oregon’s first government was formed and attracts 300,000 visitors a year.

The new government was based in Oregon City and was the first

independent government on the West Coast as California was a Mexican province. The laws for the new Oregon government covered Washington and Idaho in addition to present day Oregon.

Some of the laws immediately passed by the provisional legislature were these:

1. Protection from predatory animals with financial rewards for citizens who shot wolves or cougars.
2. A militia was formed so settlers would feel protected in case unrest arose from the Kalapooya tribes whose lands in the Willamette Valley were being expropriated.
3. A legal system with marshals was created.
4. Most importantly, the new government could issue title to which the settlers had claim. Without title these residents were mere squatters.

Champoeg, itself, became a bustling village on the banks of the Willamette with stores, blacksmith shops, saloons, grain storage warehouses, and a two-story hotel which marked the intersection of two major roads and their stage coach lines. Just east of the central site where the 1843 vote was taken, farmer Robert Newell platted part of his farm into postage stamp town lots just like the townsites back East.

However, the massive flood of 1861, which devastated most of Western Oregon, wiped out the settlement and its businesses, although the hardy

settlers rebuilt, and Champoeg did well until 1890 when once more the Willamette again breached its banks and washed the town away for a second time. It has never been rebuilt.

The state park commemorating the establishment of the first independent government on the West Coast was established by Oregon governor T. T. Geer in 1900. Only one man of those who gathered at Champoeg in 1843 was then still alive, F. X. Matthieu, one of the French Canadians who had voted for the provincial government and remembered the actual spot where the vote had been taken, which today is marked by a 16 ½ foot obelisk that was erected in 1901.



Are you ready for winter?

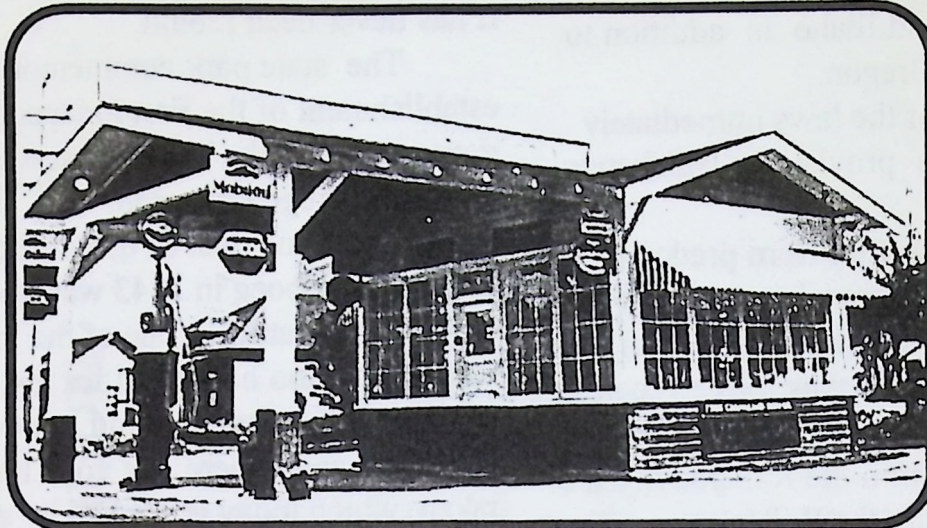


Newer Polaroid photo of winter scene.

Snow on Wagner Creek Road.
Photo from THS collection.

A Page from the Talent Album - view it at the Public Library

NEWTON'S Service Station



Corner of Talent Avenue and Wagner Creek Road -now you can fill up with coffee

Service Stations popped up everywhere when the highway went through Talent. Thomas Newton, the service station owner, must have made good money to afford the big fur coat! Both pictures are from the THS collection.



"Remember the days of old; consider the generations long past."

Membership Application Form

Name _____

Mailing Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

(Make check payable to Talent Historical Society)

* Individual (\$ 10.00) * Family (15.00) * Junior (\$5.00) * Business Sponsorship \$50.00

More Membership Levels:

Sponsors	\$ 20.00 - \$100.00
E.K. Anderson Society	\$100. annually
John Beeson Society	\$250. annually
Jacob Wagner Society	\$500. annually
Aaron P. Talent Society	\$750. annually

Talent Historical Society

206 E. Main St. P. O. Box 582

Talent, OR 97540

541-512-8838 talenthistory@jeffnet.org

Amount Paid _____

Date _____

Received by _____

EDITORIAL

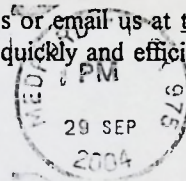
An annual meeting may sound about as inviting as an annual check up at the doctor's office but let me assure you there will be no probing or prodding only information and fun at Talent Historical Society's **Annual Membership Meeting**. Though members are especially invited it is open to the public (bring a friend). This year the meeting is scheduled for **Sunday November 7th** and will start at 1:00 in the afternoon in the **Community Hall** in Talent. Beside the various reports from the board and the director about what we have been up to and what we plan for, the primitive paintings of John Moulton, William Oatman and Lydia Powers will be on display. Be a part of the future by preserving the past and assure that your grandchildren and great grandchildren will know about the history [and herstory] of our little town.



Please call the office and give us your email address or email us at talenthistory@jeffnet.org. Having your address will help us contact you more quickly and efficiently than snail mail.

Talent Historical Society

P.O. Box 582 • Talent, OR • 97540-9766
541-512-8838 • talenthistory@jeffnet.org



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USE ZIP CODE

Woodville Historical Society
P.O. Box 1288
Rogue River, OR 97537